(b) The information is being collected from the State Government.

(c) and (d) The enquiry committee has been constituted by the State Government. The Committee is yet to give its findings.

[English]

Task Force for Redressal of Public Grievances

1649. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the Ministries and Departments of the Union Government have been directed to constitute a task force comprising of officials and representatives from the consumer groups to evolve a comprehensive charter for the redressal of public grievances and improved public satisfaction;

(b) if so, the details of the guidelines issued by the Union Government in this regard;

(c) the present position in regard to the constitution of the task force; and

(d) the time by which the task force is likely to start functioning ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As part of the Government's pursuit of Effective and Responsive Administration at all levels, various Ministries/Departments have been asked to set up Task Forces for introduction, in a phased manner, of the concept of Citizens' Charter. The Charter incorporates essentially citizens' entitlement to public services, wide publicity of standards of performance, quality of services, access to information, simplified procedures of complaints, time-bound redressal of grievances and provision for independent scrutiny of performance. A number of Ministries/Departments have constituted Task Forces for evolving their respective Charters since January, 1997. Initially, Ministries/ Departments with a large public interface have been identified for introducing the concept. The Task Forces are functioning in many of these Ministries and some of them have completed the task of preparing a Draft Charter. The Charters also incorporate a visible machinery for public grievance redressal and information to the public.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

1650. DR. ASIM BALA :
SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :
SHRI N.J. RATHWA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the norms fixed by the Government for opening of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country;

(b) the plan chalked out by the Government to open Krishi Vigyan Kendras in each district of the country; and

(c) the expected time limit fixed to achieve the goal ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The norms fixed by the Govt. includes availability of 50 acres of representatives cultivable land in one stretch located as far as possible in central part of the districts, some civic facilities, adequate technical backstopping from the host institution and acceptance of funding pattern.

(b) and (c) A comprehensive plan has been chalked out and taken up with the Planning Commission which covers upgradation of existing Farmers Training Centres and Zonal Research Stations to take up the functions of KVKs, besides establishment of new KVKs in the remaining districts in phases during 9th Five Year Plan.

Forest Protection Force

1651. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the states facilitated by the Central Government to raise Forest Protection Force;

(b) whether the smugglers are destroying the forests of the North Eastern Regions immensely;

(c) if so, whether the Government of Tripura has submitted a proposal to raise a battalion of the Forest Protection Force; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to accord sanction to the proposal and to protect the forests of the North-Eastern regions ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) A centrally sponsored scheme "Development of Infrastructure for Protection of Forest against Biotic Interference" under Seventh Five Year Plan, had been transferred to state seetor, as per decision taken by the National Development Council. At present, no assistance is provided to States by the Central Government to raise forest protection forces.

(b) The Central Government are aware of the decrease in forest cover in north-eastern region of the Country. As per the State of Forest Report 1995, prepared by the Forest Survey of India, forest cover in north-eastern region decreased by 783 sq. km. as compared with that in 1993. The Union Government has directed to States and Union Territories to make an indepth analysis of factors contributing to depletion of forest cover and make all out efforts to step up afforestation programmes.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The proposal of Government of Tripura could not be accorded sanction for want of any suitable scheme under the Ministry. However, a new scheme "Integrated Protection of Forests" which *inter-alia* would provide for the creation of infrastructure for the protection of forests has been proposed in Ninth Five Year Plan, to the Planning Commission.

[Translation]

Welfare of Handicapped Persons

1652. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the orders issued by the Government during the period of one year regarding plans for the welfare of the handicapped persons in Uttar Pradesh State;

(b) the assistance sought from the Central Government for these plans; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government for providing the same ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (c) The required information has been called for from the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

[English]

Development of Vananchal

1653. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Centrally sponsored projects being implemented in Bihar to convert the plateau of Vananchal into a cultivable land;

(b) the details of the projects launched by the Government during the Eighth Five Year Plan for the development of Chhota Nagpur Santhal Pargana Plateau and its present position;

(c) whether the Government propose to take up a Central project for the plantation of fructiferous trees in this plateau;

(d) whether the Government have conducted a survey for developing forests, horticulture and cultivation of vegetables in this area and propose to launch a special scheme in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The world Bank Aided "Bihar Plateau Development Project" is being implemented in ten Districts of the Plateau region of Bihar from 16th March, 1993. The project has a span of five years and aims at creation of basic infrastructure for development of agriculture, drinking water, minor irrigation, rural roads etc. The revised cost of the project is Rs. 444 crores.

Besides a number of Central/Centrally Sponsored Schemes have been taken up by the Government of India to assist the State Government in the development of agriculture. This include the schemes for National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas, Soil Conservation in the Catchment of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone Rivers, Reclamation of Alkali lands with EEC assistance, which aim at improvement of land capability.

(c) Agro-climatic conditions in Vananchal are not suitable for cashew production. Regarding cultivation of juicy fruits, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of fruits is being implemented in all States including Bihar. Under the scheme assistance is provided for area expansion, improving productivity, establishment of nurseries and Tissue Culture Units, training of farmers and demonstration etc. Further distribution of this assistance for different regions of the State is decided by the State Authorities.

(d) and (e) A techno-economic feasibility report on Integrated Horticulture Development Programme in Bihar was prepared by M/s Agro-Horticulture Services, New Delhi in 1994. The report was sponsored by the National Horticulture Board. The report suggested the potential and programmes for horticulture crops in all regions of Bihar including Chhotanagpur area. Assistance is provided to the Government of Bihar through various schemes in horticulture for planting materials, area expansion, transfer of technology, increasing production and productivity and post harvest management infrastructure.

The Government of India is also contemplating to start cultivation of Soyabean crop in the Chhotanagpur area of Bihar.

Agricultural Projects

1654. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Kerala Government has recently submitted any proposal for the central assistance for various Agricultural Projects in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) Government of Kerala has submitted a number of agricultural projects